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PM-LEAK SKED 6-2

NEW LEAK AT THE TOP?

BY JIM ANDERSON

WASHINGTON (UPI) -- THE SHIP OF STATE IS LEAKING AND ONCE AGAIN IT LOOKS AS THOUGH THE LEAK IS COMING FROM THE TOP.

THE STATE DEPARTMENT CONFIRMED LAST WEEK IT WAS STARTING AN "URGENT INVESTIGATION" TO FIND OUT WHO LEAKED SEVERAL HIGHLY CLASSIFIED "WORKING PAPERS" ABOUT U.S. POLICY TOWARD SOUTH AFRICA TO A BLACK-ORIENTED LOBBY GROUP, TRANSAFRICA, WHICH, THEN PASSED THEM ALONG TO SEVERAL NEWS ORGANIZATIONS.

ON MONDAY, THE STATE DEPARTMENT WAS CONFRONTED WITH ANOTHER LEAK -- A LONG POSITION PAPER ON U.S. POLICY TOWARD ANGOLA, PARTS OF WHICH APPEARED IN THE NEW YORK TIMES.

ALTHOUGH DESCRIBED AS "OUTDATED" BY A STATE DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN, THE PAPER WAS CLASSIFIED.

THE STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICE OF SECURITY HAS BEEN ORDERED TO EXPAND ITS INVESTIGATION TO FIND OUT WHO HAD ACCESS TO THE DOCUMENT AND WHO MIGHT HAVE LEAKED IT.

ACCORDING TO ONE ACCOUNT, WHAT SECRETARY OF STATE ALEXANDER HAIG FINDS DISTURBING ABOUT THE LEAKS IS THAT THEY BOTH APPARENTLY CAME FROM THE SAME BUREAU OF THE STATE DEPARTMENT -- THE ONE HANDLING SOUTHERN AFRICA -- AND BOTH INVOLVED TYPES OF DOCUMENTS THAT ARE CIRCULATED ON A VERY LIMITED BASIS.

ONE OFFICIAL SAID THE DOCUMENTS OBTAINED BY TRANSAFRICA INCLUDED A SO-CALLED "SCOPE PAPER," GENERALLY LIMITED TO THE BRIEFING BOOKS CARRIED BY ONLY A HANDFUL OF OFFICIALS AT THE HEART OF THE POLICY FORMATION PROCESS. THAT THEORETICALLY WOULD REDUCE THE SUSPECTS TO A HALF-DOZEN PEOPLE HOLDING THE RANK OF DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE OR HIGHER.

ALL THE PEOPLE AT THAT LEVEL IN THE AFRICAN BUREAU ARE EITHER VETERAN FOREIGN SERVICE OFFICERS OR REAGAN ADMINISTRATION POLITICAL APPOINTEES.

ONE OFFICIAL WHO HAS WORKED ON SIMILAR SECURITY INVESTIGATIONS IN THE PAST SAID THE MATTER IS NOT SO SIMPLE.

AS AN EXAMPLE, HE CITED THE LEAK OF A MEMO ABOUT ARMS CONTROL NEGOTIATIONS FROM PRESIDENT NIXON TO SECRETARY OF STATE WILLIAM P. ROGERS IN THE EARLY 1970S.